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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MAPUTO 000962

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MZ](#)

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION MDM PARTY LEADERS DISCUSS ELECTION STRATEGY

REF: A. MAPUTO 609
[1](#)B. MAPUTO 725
[1](#)C. MAPUTO 797
[1](#)D. MAPUTO 408
[1](#)E. MAPUTO 778

Classified By: A/DCM Matthew Roth, Reasons 1.4(b+d)

[11.](#) (C) SUMMARY: PolOffs met recently with Ismael Mussa and Joao Carlos Colaco, both Members of Parliament and opposition Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM) sympathizers. Mussa resigned from RENAMO in late May, but technically serves in Parliament as an independent because formally switching parties mid-term would force him to vacate his seat. Discussing the upcoming October 28 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, Mussa and Colaco described concerns over the growing inflexibility of national politics. According to Mussa, this inflexibility is directly linked to the expanded mandate of the ruling FRELIMO party in Parliament, which, unless checked, will provide significantly more power to the Executive Branch, particularly should FRELIMO gain more than two-thirds of Parliamentary seats, resulting in a super-majority and the ability to change the Constitution at will. Mussa also described MDM's meeting with a late-July European Union international observation assessment team, where he highlighted the need for international observers to limit election malfeasance. The two described problems with the electoral system, MDM's platform, how Daviz Simango could win the election, and asked for USG assistance in English language training and in election observation. While an MDM win on October 28 is a long shot, any situation involving run-off elections and losses by FRELIMO is unlikely to result in a smooth transition of power. END SUMMARY.

VOTER REGISTRATION CONCERNS

[12.](#) (C) Mussa opened with complaints of FRELIMO's heavy-handed electoral misconduct, which echoed the same points MDM leader Daviz Simango articulated in May (Ref A). Mussa explained that voter registration, which ended in July, did not work in a large percentage of rural areas where between 63 and 78 percent of the population resides. MDM raised concerns with the new voting machines provided by Insitec, a company with connections to President Armando Guebuza (Note: Insitec Investimentos is a holding company comprised of Intellica, a strategy and IT consultancy firm, I-Constroi, an office and residential infrastructure construction company, Energia capital, an energy and bio-fuels investment firm, and I-Tec, a technical service and hardware maintenance company. Insitec is led by Celso Correria, a 31-year old with tight connections to the ruling party and the President. He also owns ELETIC, the company that this year received the contract to handle voter registration.

End note.) While MDM is uneasy about problems with voter registration, Mussa did not seem concerned that FRELIMO would commit fraud on election day, rather, he said issues of procedural fraud are in process now in the run-up to 28 October (REF B).

MDM'S PLATFORM FOR CHANGE

¶3. (C) Mussa then explained several concrete policy changes the MDM would make if elected in October. One issue important to the party is education. They propose altering the current scholarship system, allowing students the choice to spend the money on either a public or private university, and including a small bursary for living expenses--this aligns well with MDM's strong support among young voters, including university students. Other youth-friendly policies include increasing government expenditure for affordable housing and youth employment schemes. MDM also believes strongly in decentralizing health resources, focusing on the district level.

¶4. (C) Further describing the MDM platform, Mussa said the party would change the tax system, reducing overall percentages but broadening the base, since currently only 6 percent of citizens pay income tax. MDM proposes a reform that would allow citizens to take deductions on medicines, education, day care and other related expenses, which theoretically would increase people's willingness to pay taxes because they would feel as though they are getting value for the money, and in turn also would reduce the

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state's cost in investigating tax evaders.

¶5. (C) MDM plans on instilling a "culture of receipts," in an effort to address the large informal market system in Mozambique, and generate greater tax revenues. MDM would improve the business climate in an effort to attract small and medium private investment projects, in contrast to large mega-projects favored by the FRELIMO elite. They propose reforming conflict of interest rules so government employees could no longer own large shares of private companies (Note: Guebuza is one of the country's wealthiest businessmen, and his companies receive lucrative government contracts. See REF ¶C. End Note.) In agriculture, MDM sees Mozambique's missing development link, and would develop stronger farmer-to-market initiatives in order to expand agricultural exports and generate employment. Finally, MDM has plans for an innovative water policy, to include reviewing water-sharing agreements with Swaziland and South Africa, and the development of a series of dams in southern Mozambique to address the region's accelerated urbanization. MDM would also like to explore developing East-West waterways for transportation.

RENAMO'S FATE IN THE ELECTIONS

¶6. (C) When asked why some people still supported RENAMO when MDM has a clear platform of reform, Mussa said there are two types of RENAMO supporters. A very small number of formal members support RENAMO because they still like the party. More people belong to a second group of informal members, which includes many National Assembly members who will not renounce their membership because they do not want to lose their vote and seat in the National Assembly)- Mussa put himself in this category. Many informal opposition supporters, he predicts, will vote for MDM on election day (REF D). MDM assesses their support is strongest in traditional RENAMO strongholds, such as Sofala and Zambeze provinces. When asked what would happen if MDM beat RENAMO in the election, Mussa confided they already were in back-room discussions with some RENAMO members, and that they

were actively working to make an informal bloc to avoid conflicts. Noting that in the 2007 Municipal Elections Daviz Simango gained more votes than FRELIMO and RENAMO combined in the city of Beira, Mussa predicted MDM will continue to draw votes from RENAMO, and possibly win the October 28 Parliamentary elections in the northern half of the country, including Sofala, Nampula, Zambezi, Niassa, and possibly 5 of 19 seats in Maputo. While they have not done public opinion polling, they assess Mozambicans are afraid to stand up to FRELIMO, and simply do not vote at all on election day. To combat this apathy, Mussa said the MDM will concentrate on drawing disaffected youth to the polls. The MDM is enlisting Azagaia, a popular rap star who sings anti-government songs, to support the party.

MDM'S WINNING SCENARIO

¶7. (C) While Mussa did not believe MDM would win outright in October, "the goal is to get a good showing" he said, he did describe a long-shot situation in which Simango could become president in a runoff election (Ref E). Pointing to dissatisfied youth and a business community increasingly frustrated with FRELIMO control of the economy, Mussa explained that of the three million voters in the last presidential election, 2 million voted for Guebuza and 1 million for Dhalakama (Note: Voter turnout was only 36%. End Note.) MDM thinks that if enough voters go to the polls, and the votes are sufficiently split among the three remaining presidential contenders, then possibly no candidate will achieve the required 50-plus-1 percentage of voters required under the Constitution. In that case, Mozambique would have a runoff election between the top two vote-getters, and Mussa said that an unprecedented runoff could further strengthen MDM's position, with voters anticipating real change. Mussa alluded to the end of apartheid in South Africa, saying that when the time was right, even whites voted to end the political system.

MDM REQUESTS USG ASSISTANCE

¶8. (C) Mussa closed out the meeting with two requests for USG assistance. He explained that lack of English language

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ability hurt Mozambique's ability to interact with the rest of SADC and the Commonwealth. Weak English skills also mean that this Lusophone country is relatively isolated when it comes to conducting cross-border trade with the rest of SADC.

Mussa asked if the USG could sponsor an nonpartisan English-language program for Members of Parliament, in an effort to build their capacity to interact with equivalents in other SADC countries. He also requested USG assistance with election observers, because he felt neutral observers would serve as a counterbalance to any election shenanigans FRELIMO might impart on election day.

COMMENT: MDM SHOULD NOT BE MISUNDERESTIMATED

¶9. (C) Discussions with MDM's Mussa and Colaco prove that RENAMO's intellectuals are increasingly transitioning to MDM.

In sharp contrast to other opposition parties, the MDM appears to have a fairly well-planned draft platform, developed in an effort to attract a higher voter turnout among those who are disillusioned with the ruling FRELIMO party's efforts since independence. With an average age of 17, the population of Mozambique is extremely young, and these youth groups appear to be the most susceptible to "voter fatigue"--youth did not vote in large numbers in the 2005 national elections. MDM's leader Daviz Simango has proven himself to be an excellent administrator of Beira, and

his natural charisma plays particularly well with younger groups. Nonetheless, MDM's winning scenario in the upcoming October 28 national elections is a long shot given FRELIMO's control of state resources and the electoral system.

CHAPMAN